

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 194781

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CASE, SOCI, CO

SUBJECT: COOPER KIDNAPPING

REF: (A) BOGOTA 7701; (B) FEAREY-AMBASSADOR TELECON 8/15

1. INTERTEL IS WASHINGTON, D.C. BASED FIRM WHICH DOES PHYSICAL SECURITY SURVEYS, INVESTIGATIONS AND PROTECTION PLANNING. WE DO NOT HAVE DETAILED INFORMATION ON FIRM, BUT KNOW THAT IN THESE AREAS IT HAS EXCELLENT REPUTATION. THREE FORMER A/SY OFFICERS AND FORMER FBI, CIA AND SCOTLAND YARD EMPLOYEES ARE CURRENTLY WORKING FOR INTERTEL.

2. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON INTERTEL'S NEGOTIATION CAPABILITIES. ITS ABILITY TO OPERATE ABROAD IS ALSO UNKNOWN. TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE IT HAS NOT RP NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY KIDNAP CASES IN ARGENTINA. FIRM PRACTICE IN US HAS BEEN TO ESTABLISH OFFICES WHEREVER IT HAS CON-TRACTS.

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3. DEPARTMENT SHARES EMBASSY'S RESERVATIONS ABOUT SEARS'

USE OF INTERTEL. POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF INTERTEL'S UNKNOWN CAPABILITIES IN KIDNAP CASES SEEMS HEAVILY OUTWEIGHED BY RISK TO SEARS' APPARENTLY EFFECTIVE RELATIONS WITH GOC.

4. RE PARA 2 REF (A), AND CONFIRMING REF (B), DEPARTMENT CONCURS IN APPROACH EMBASSY HAS ADOPTED IN ITS DISCUSSION OF COOPER CASE WITH GOC AND SEARS, WHICH APPEARS IN FULL ACCORD WITH A-775 GUIDANCE. WITH ANTICIPATED RECEIPT OF DEMANDS, CASE WILL OF COURSE ENTER NEW PHASE. ONE MATTER WHICH MAY PRESENT ITSELF, ON WHICH A-775 GUIDANCE IS NOT EXPLICIT, IS WHETHER AND TO WHAT EXTENT USG SHOULD BE PREPARED TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SEARS REPRESENTATIVES IN BOGOTA AND SEARS HOME OFFICE EMBODYING OR CONCERNING RANSOM DEMANDS. EMBASSY SHOULD SEEK DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL BEFORE SUCH FACILITATION IS PROVIDED.

5. SEARS MAY IN ADDITION SEEK EMBASSY'S AND DEPARTMENT'S ADVICE RE ITS RESPONSE TO DEMANDS. AS EMBASSY IS AWARE, USG BELIEVES THAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS, COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS SHOULD FOLLOW USG'S NO RANSOM POLICY. IF ASKED BY SEARS HERE, DEPARTMENT WILL EXPRESS THIS POSITION. IF FURTHER QUERIED, DEPARTMENT WILL RECOGNIZE THAT USG HAS NO LEGAL MEANS TO RESTRAIN SUCH PARTIES IF THEY CHOOSE TO PROVIDE RANSOM. EMBASSY SHOULD MAKE SAME POINTS PER A-775. WE UNDERSTAND FROM REF (B) THAT EMBASSY, GOC AND LOCAL SEARS REPRESENTATIVES, THOUGH ANXIOUS TO SECURE COOPER'S SAFE RETURN, AN OBJECTIVE DEPARTMENT STRONGLY SHARES, ARE ALSO ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF DESIRABILITY OF NOT PROVIDING AN INCENTIVE FOR FUTURE KIDNAPPINGS.

6. IF SEARS DECIDES TO MEET A RANSOM DEMAND AND SEARS OR GOC ASKS FOR USG ASSISTANCE (E.G., DETECTION DEVICES, SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT, ETC.), DEPARTMENT WILL CONSIDER SUCH ASSISTANCE IN LIGHT OF EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATIONS, TAKING ACCOUNT OF NATURE OF REQUEST AND OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES. SISCO

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